



# Safety Tips for Handling Chicks and Ducklings

Many children receive chicks and ducklings as gifts during the Easter season.

However, they do not receive any tips for safe handling of these little birds. Abiding by a few easy guidelines can keep all animal handlers safe and healthy.

- Unsafe handling of chicks and ducklings has been linked to cases of *Salmonella*.
- Children are at a higher risk of getting sick because they are less likely to wash their hands after handling or playing with the birds and have more frequent hand-to-mouth contact than adults.

## What is *Salmonella*?

*Salmonella* bacteria are living microscopic creatures that pass from the feces of animals or people to other animals or people. Several hundred cases occur each year in Missouri. Children more commonly become ill with *Salmonella* than adults.

## How Do I Avoid Getting *Salmonella* from Chicks or Ducklings?

- **Wash your hands** (and the hands of infants and children) with soap and water after handling these birds and after touching anything that had contact with them.
- Avoid contact with feces from chicks and ducklings.
- Keep chicks and ducklings away from food-preparation and children's play areas.

## Important Information about *Salmonella*:

- Symptoms of *Salmonella* infection usually begin 12-36 hours after exposure.
- Symptoms include diarrhea, fever, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting and headache.
- Some people may have very mild or no symptoms.
- Illness usually lasts 4-7 days.
- Most people will recover without treatment.

For more information about salmonellosis: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub\\_salmonella.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_salmonella.htm)

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